

National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: October 5, 2015  
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**Women of Valor and Other Super Heroes:  
Jewish Feminist Art, Made From Cut-Up Comics**



Los Angeles, CA (Date: October 5, 2015) - In his new show, "Women of Valor and Other Super Heroes," (opening October 18 at the National Council of Jewish Women / Los Angeles), papercut artist Isaac Brynjugard-Bialik explores women's voices in the Torah, especially the relationships between mothers and daughters - which he feels are sorely underrepresented.

"We've got Abraham and Isaac, we've got Isaac and his sons, we have Jacob and his 12 sons," he says. "But there's so little interaction between mothers and daughters." Brynjugard-Bialik's show is primarily focused on what he refers to as the "super women of Jewish tradition" - through the lens of pop culture narratives. His papercuts blend traditional sources and comic book stories in seamless graphic compositions made of cut-up comics, maps, and other ephemera; his work is emblematic of the 21st century's mash-up culture.

In the gloriously colorful "Tree of Mothers and Daughters," the four biblical matriarchs peek through the leaves and branches of a massive tree made from cut-up comics featuring famous mother-daughter super heroes who have shared a name and secret identity - such as Black Canary and Silk Spectre.

*"I'm exploring the idea of women's voices in our traditional texts,"* says Brynjegard-Bialik. *"The passing of traditions and ideas from mother to daughter, certainly - but also focusing on the strong female heroes that are often pushed to the fringes of scholarship."* He points out that Jewish scholarship and comics have traditionally been male-dominated arenas - and though that's changed recently, he's made it a personal quest to seek out and highlight women's voices in both traditions.



He comes to this pursuit authentically - his wife Shawna is a rabbi at Temple Ahavat Shalom in Northridge, and they have three daughters. *"My wife is my muse,"* he explains. *"She inspires me, and we study and discuss while I'm developing pieces. She helps me concretize my ideas and ground them in traditional sources."*

Each of his works is based on some text as a starting point - Torah, Talmud, or even just a psalm or parable. In "Yael" he represents the eponymous biblical warrior heroine with comic book heroine Gamora, *"the deadliest woman in the whole galaxy"* - within the geometric re-imagining of the silhouette of a Nubian Ibex, a strong and graceful desert creature found throughout the country of Israel. It's not surprising that one of his daughters bears the name as well; he and his wife are determined to raise three strong, confident Jewish women.

There are more than two dozen works in the show, dominated by images of female super heroes, recontextualized in papercuts inspired by biblical battles, religious iconography, and even the laws and statutes of the Talmud.

The show's location is appropriate for two reasons. Brynjegard-Bialik's feminist work seems particularly at home at the National Council of Jewish Women / Los Angeles, but it's also a bit of a homecoming, since he grew up in the neighborhood. *"I lived a few blocks from here, and I used to buy my comics right up the street on Melrose, at Golden Apple,"* he says. *"I bought clothes at the thrift shops that used to be up there, and learned to ride a bike across the street at Fairfax High School."*

Brynjegard-Bialik has two papercuts in the concurrent 2015 Jerusalem Biennale, recently completed a series of 13 windows for Maimonides Jewish Day School in Portland, Oregon, and is presently at work on a large commission for the new chapel at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

"Women of Valor and Other Super Heroes" opens October 18, 2015, at the National Council of Jewish Women / Los Angeles, with a reception from 3 to 5 in the afternoon. The exhibition is open until November 30, 2015.

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"Women of Valor and Other Super Heroes"

October 18 - November 30, 2015

Opening reception on October 18, from 3 - 5 p.m.

National Council of Jewish Women / Los Angeles

543 North Fairfax Avenue

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More information available at:

<http://bit.ly/womenofvalorncjwla>

<http://www.facebook.com/events/540877442732195>

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The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates committed to the welfare and well-being of the Los Angeles Community. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. NCJW/LA serves more than 12,000 individuals through our Community Mental Health and Supportive Services, Scholarships, Talkline, Youth Educational Programs and Services, Back 2 School Store, intern training programs and our clothing assistance projects. NCJW/LA social justice programs provide education and legislative advocacy on issues that affect and impact women, children and families in the areas of children's rights, economic justice, healthcare, human trafficking, reproductive justice, LGBTQ, and gender related violence. All donations to our 8 Council Thrift Shops support the programs and services of NCJW/LA. NCJW/LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (Tax ID #95-1641433). Donate Today to Council Thrift (800)400-6259. To Get Help Call 877-655-3807 or for more info visit [www.ncjwla.org](http://www.ncjwla.org), call 323-651-2930, or email [info@ncjwla.org](mailto:info@ncjwla.org). **Donate Today to Council Thrift (800)400-6259. To Get Help Call 877-655-3807** or for more info visit [www.ncjwla.org](http://www.ncjwla.org), call 323-651-2930, or email [info@ncjwla.org](mailto:info@ncjwla.org).